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Message Text

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14
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
---------- 123246
P 071034Z MAY 76
FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7507

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUCHAREST 2567

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EEWT, PFOR, CVIS, RO
SUBJECT: JEWISH EMIGRATION

REF: STATE 09824

1. ISRAEL AMBASSADOR PROVIDED FOLLOWING STATISTICS TODAY ON EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL.

--JANUARY 320

--FEBRUARY 230

--MARCH 100

--APRIL 45

HE OBSERVED THAT TEN PERCENT SHOULD BE ADDED TO THESE FIGURES TO COVER DEPARTURES TO COUNTRIES OTHER THAN ISRAEL.

2. FOR THE FIRST TIME AMB COHEN REFUSED TO OFFER DATA ON APPROVALS, NOTING THAT THE "SYSTEM HAS CHANGED" MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE TO KNOW AT ANY GIVEN POINT HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE IN THE PIPE LINE. HE AVOIDED ALL QUESTIONS AS TO HOW THE SYSTEM HAD CHANGED AND WHY. HE DID SAY THAT HE EXPECTED A "SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE" IN DEPARTURESIN MAY AND JUNE LINKED WITH CONGRESSIONAL MFN
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REVIEW. ASKED HOW MANY PEOPLE HAD BEEN PROCESSED SO

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FAR THIS MONTH, HE FEIGNED IGNORANCE OTHER THAN TO OBSERVE THAT "WE ARE BUSIER NOW THAN LAST MONTH".

3. WHEN QUERIED WHETHER HE HAD RECENTLY DISCUSSED SITUATION WITH EITHER MACOVESCU OR PACOSTE, AMB COHEN SAID HE RARELY BROUGHT UP SUBJECT OF EMIGRATION WITH MFA. THERE WEERE "OTHER CHANNELS" AVAILABLE TO HIM. QUESTIONS ABOUT THESE OTHER CHANNELS ELICITED NOTHING MORE THAN ENIGMATIC SMILES. WHEN ASKED WHETHER ANY NEW BUREAUCRATIC IMPEDIMENTS HAD RECENTLY SURFACED TO CAUSE THE SLOW DOWN, HE RESPONDED NO.

4. COMMENT. THIS WAS A STRANGE AND MOST UNTYPICAL PERFORMANCE BY AMB COHEN. I DO NOT BELIEVE HIM WHEN HE CLAIMS HE DOES NOT KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING ON APPROVALS. DURING A BRIEF ENCOUNTER WITH RABBI ROSEN EARLIER IN THE WEEK HE TOLD ME THAT "THINGS ARE SUDDENLY GOING MUCH BETTER" AND THAT HE EXPECTED A SHARP INCREASE IN EMIGRATION ACTIVITY IN THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS. UNFORTUNATELY HE IS NOW OUT OF THE COUNTRY SO WE CANNOT FOLLOW UP ON THOSE REMARKS FOR THE TIME BEING. IT IS HARD TO AVOID THE IMPRESSION THAT AMB COHEN'S BEHAVIOUR THIS MORNING WAS CALCULATED TO MOVE US IN THE DIRECTION OF THE "URGENT AND EFFECTIVE ACTION" REFERRED TO IN PARA 6 REFTEL. IN THIS CONNECTION DO WE HAVE ANY EVIDENCE THE ISRAELIS ARE DOING ANYTHING EITHER URGENTLY OR EFFECTIVELY TO HELP THEMSELVES IN THIS SITUATION BEYOND SPURRING AMERICAN JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS INTO ACTION?
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